

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The claims are 2-11. Claim 1 has been canceled in favor of new claim 8 to better define the invention. Accordingly, claims 2-4 and 6-7, which previously depended on claim 1, have been amended to depend on new claim 8. These claims and claim 5 have also been amended to improve their form. New claim 9 has been added, which corresponds to new claim 8 but omits the feature of the central articulation. New claim 10, which refers back to this new claim 9, is directed to a sliding unit provided in the longitudinal shaft. New claim 11 dependent on new claim 10 further specifies that the at least one sliding unit includes a sliding articulation. In addition, the specification has been amended to insert headings as requested by the Examiner and to conform to reference numerals appearing in the drawings. Reconsideration is expressly requested.

The drawings were objected to because (1) reference numeral 8 appears at page 8, line 9, but does not appear in the drawings and (2) reference numerals 8a, 8b, and 14c appear in the drawings but not in the description. In response, Applicant has amended

the specification at page 8 (and the list of reference numerals) to refer to welding seams 8a and 8b, instead of weld seam 8. In addition, the first section on page 11 of the description has been amended to refer to the position indicated with 14c in the drawing. It is respectfully submitted that the foregoing amendments overcome the objections to the drawings, and Applicant respectfully requests that the objection to the drawings be withdrawn.

The specification was objected to as lacking headings and the Abstract of the Disclosure was objected to as containing phrases that can be implied. In response, Applicant has amended the specification to insert such headings and has amended the Abstract to improve its form. It is respectfully submitted that the foregoing amendments overcome the objection to the specification and the Abstract, and Applicant respectfully requests that the objections to the specification and abstract be withdrawn as well.

The claims were objected to because elements of the claims were not separated by line indentation, and claims 1-7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for the reasons set forth on page 4 of the Office Action. In response, Applicant has canceled claim 1 in favor of new claim 8, and has amended claims 2-7 to improve their form, which it is respectfully submitted overcomes the Examiner's objection to the claims and rejection under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, on the basis of these informalities.

With respect to the Examiner's rejection under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, of claim 7 that claim 7 is unclear as to how the shaft segments 2 and 3 can be telescopic, due to the presence of the stationary bearing unit 25 between them and shown in FIG. 1, which in the Examiner's view would prevent the shaft tube 2 from moving far enough to the right so that it could be telescopically received in shaft tube 3, this rejection is respectfully traversed.

Specifically, the two shaft segments are not held non-displaceable in normal use by the stationary bearing because the bearing itself is held in an elastic member. Thus, the bearing 25 mainly serves for reducing vibrations without holding the shaft fixed in an axial or radial direction; however, the movement allowed by the flexible suspension of the bearing might not be enough to allow the two shaft segments to be telescopically received one in the another.

Nevertheless, it is believed that claim 7 is sufficiently clear for the following reasons.

The main purpose of the features of claim 7 is described in more detail in the second paragraph on page 6 of the specification: in case of an accident this bearing will collapse to allow one of the two segments to be telescopically received in the other segment. This feature significantly reduces the risk of serious injuries of the passengers in a car accident as the shaft is not able to bend out and intrude into the passenger compartment. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the

recitation in claim 7 that the two shaft segments of the longitudinally shaft can be pushed onto one another in the manner in a telescope would be sufficiently clear to one skilled in the art upon reading the specification. With this embodiment of the longitudinal shaft, it is avoided that the longitudinal shaft will bend out when compressed at an end, for example, as the result of an accident, and penetrate into the passenger compartment of the vehicle. Instead, if an in-line compression occurs, the two shaft segments of the longitudinal shaft will move into one another in the manner of a telescope so that danger to the passengers in the passenger compartment of the vehicle resulting from the longitudinal shaft is reduced.

Claims 1-7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by *Jacob U.S. Patent No. 6,241,617* for the reasons set forth on page 5 of the Office Action.

This rejection is respectfully traversed.

As set forth in new claims 8 and 9, Applicant's invention provides a longitudinal shaft for use in an automobile having all-wheel drive or rear-wheel drive. The shaft includes a gearbox-side articulation and a differential-side articulation. The gearbox-side articulation has a first inner hub and a first outer hub at least partially surrounding the first inner hub. The differential-side articulation has a second inner hub and a second outer hub at least partially surrounding the second inner hub.

As recited in new claim 8, the longitudinal shaft also includes a central articulation having a third inner hub and a third outer hub at least partially surrounding the third inner hub at least in some regions, and first and second shaft segments connected with one another so as to rotate together by way of the central articulation. As recited in new claim 9, the longitudinal shaft includes a shaft segment connected with the first and second outer hub so as to rotate together.

As recited in each of new claims 8 and 9, each of the first and second inner hubs has a respective central bore provided with a plug-in connection to connect the longitudinal shaft for integral rotation and to center the longitudinal shaft on journals of a gearbox output shaft and a differential input shaft, respectively. In this way, Applicant's invention provides a longitudinal shaft in which the centripetal forces that cause vibrations and noises are reduced to the greatest possible extent.

Jacob fails to disclose or suggest a longitudinal shaft having the structure recited in new claims 8 and 9, or teaches the benefits that are achieved from that structure. The proposed shaft disclosed in *Jacob* has the two inner hubs of the respective outer articulations of the propeller shaft are connected to segments of the propeller shaft itself, with the outer hubs of these two articulations provided with a flange and damping elements (15, 31) so as to connect the flange with a corresponding flange of a gearbox output shaft or a differential input shaft. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that *Jacob* fails

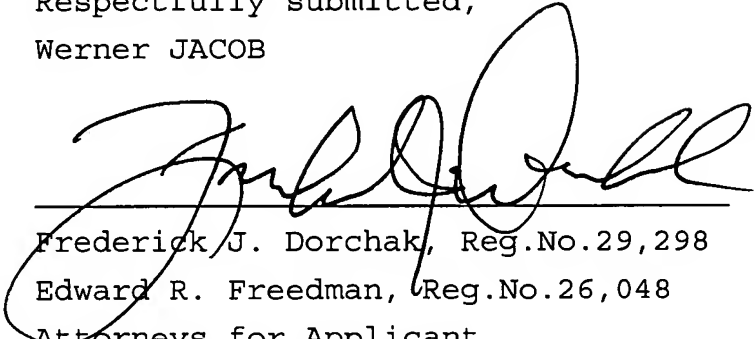
to disclose or render obvious Applicant's longitudinal shaft as recited in new claims 8 and 9. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that new claims 8 and 9, together with claims 2-7 and 10-11, which depend respectively thereon, are patentable over the cited reference.

In summary, claims 2-7 have been amended, claim 1 has been canceled, and new claims 8-11 have been added. The specification and Abstract have also been amended. In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully requested that the claims be allowed and that this application be passed to issue.

Applicant also submits herewith a Second Supplemental
Information Disclosure Statement.

Respectfully submitted,
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Enclosures: Copy of Petition for one-month Extension of Time,
Second Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement, PTO Form
1449 with two (2) references, International Search Report, Check
in the amount of \$180.00

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with the U.S. Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope
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VA 22313-1450, on September 20, 2007.



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